

# OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

After reviewing data collected from **HARVEY LAKE, NORTHWOOD**, the program coordinators have made the following observations and recommendations:

Thank you for your continued hard work sampling the lake this season! Your monitoring group sampled **three** times this season and has done so for many years! As you know, with multiple sampling events each season, we will be able to more accurately detect changes in water quality. Keep up the good work!

A Weed Watcher training was conducted at **HARVEY LAKE** during this summer. Volunteers were trained to survey the lake once a month from **June** through **September**. To survey, volunteers slowly boat, or even snorkel, around the perimeter of the lake and any islands it may contain. Using the materials provided in the Weed Watchers Kit, volunteers look for any species that are of suspicion. After a trip or two around the lake, volunteers will have a good knowledge of its plant community and will immediately notice even the most subtle changes. If a suspicious plant is found, the volunteers will send a specimen to DES for identification. If the plant specimen is an exotic, a biologist will visit the site to determine the extent of the problem and to formulate a plan of action to control the nuisance infestation. Remember that early detection is the key to controlling the spread of exotic plants. Keep up the good work!

## **FIGURE INTERPRETATION**

- **Figure 1 and Table 1:** The graphs in Figure 1 (Appendix A) show the historical and current year chlorophyll-a concentration in the water column. Table 1 (Appendix B) lists the maximum, minimum, and mean concentration for each sampling season that the lake has been monitored through the program.

Chlorophyll-a, a pigment found in plants, is an indicator of the algal abundance. Because algae are usually microscopic plants that contain chlorophyll-a, and are naturally found in lake ecosystems, the chlorophyll-a concentration measured in the water gives an estimation of the algal concentration or lake productivity. **The median summer chlorophyll-a concentration for New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is 4.58 mg/m<sup>3</sup>.**

The current year data (the top graph) show that the chlorophyll-a concentration **increased greatly** from **June** to **July**, and then **decreased** from **July** to **August**. The chlorophyll-a concentration on the **July** and **August** sampling events was **much greater than** the state median and the similar lake median (refer to Appendix F for more information about the similar lake median) and suggests that an algal bloom had occurred.

The historical data (the bottom graph) show that the 2005 chlorophyll-a mean is **much greater than** the state median and similar lake median and is the **highest** annual mean that has been measured at the lake since monitoring began in 1995. The elevated chlorophyll concentration may have been due to increased nutrient loading into the pond caused by greater than normal precipitation.

Visual inspection of the historical data trend line (the bottom graph) shows a **variable, but overall increasing (meaning worsening)**, in-lake chlorophyll-a trend since monitoring began.

In the 2006 annual report, since your group will have sampled the chlorophyll-a concentration at the deep spot for at least 10 consecutive years, we will conduct a statistical analysis of the historic data to determine if there has been a significant change in the annual mean since monitoring began.

While algae are naturally present in all lakes, an excessive or increasing amount of any type is not welcomed. In freshwater lakes, phosphorus is the nutrient that algae depend upon for growth. Algal concentrations may increase with an increase in nonpoint sources of phosphorus loading from the watershed, or in-lake sources of phosphorus loading (such as phosphorus releases from the sediments). Therefore, it is extremely important for volunteer monitors to continually educate residents about how activities within the watershed can affect phosphorus loading and lake quality.

- **Figure 2 and Table 3:** The graphs in Figure 2 (Appendix A) show historical and current year data for lake transparency. Table 3 (Appendix B) lists the maximum, minimum and mean transparency data for each sampling season that the lake/pond has been monitored through the program.

Volunteer monitors use the Secchi-disk, a 20 cm disk with alternating black and white quadrants, to measure water clarity (how far a person can see into the water). Transparency, a measure of water clarity, can be affected by the amount of algae and sediment from erosion, as well as the natural colors of the water. **The median summer transparency for New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is 3.2 meters.**

The current year data (the top graph) show that the in-lake transparency **remained relatively stable** from **June** to **August**. The transparency on **all sampling events** was ***much less than*** the state median and similar lake median (refer to Appendix F for more information about the similar lake median).

The historical data (the bottom graph) show that the 2005 mean transparency is the ***shallowest*** annual mean that has been measured at the lake since monitoring began.

In addition, visual inspection of the historical data trend line (the bottom graph) shows a ***decreasing (meaning worsening)*** transparency trend since monitoring began.

As previously discussed, since your group will have sampled the transparency at the deep spot for at least 10 consecutive years, the 2006 annual report will include a statistical analysis of the historic data to determine if there has been a significant change in the annual mean since monitoring began.

Typically, high intensity rainfall causes erosion of sediments into lakes and streams, thus decreasing clarity. Efforts should continually be made to stabilize stream banks, lake shorelines, disturbed soils within the watershed, and especially dirt roads located immediately adjacent to the edge of tributaries and the lake. Guides to Best Management Practices designed to reduce, and possibly even eliminate, nonpoint source pollutants, such as sediment loading, are available from DES upon request.

- **Figure 3 and Table 8:** The graphs in Figure 3 (Appendix A) show the amount of phosphorus in the epilimnion (the upper layer) and the hypolimnion (the lower layer); the inset graphs show current year data. Table 8 (Appendix B) lists the annual maximum, minimum, and median concentration for each deep spot layer and each tributary since the lake/pond has joined the program.

Phosphorus is the limiting nutrient for plant and algae growth in New Hampshire's freshwater lakes and ponds. Too much phosphorus in a lake/pond can lead to increases in plant and algal growth over time. **The median summer total phosphorus concentration in the epilimnion (upper layer) of New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is 12 ug/L. The median summer phosphorus concentration in the hypolimnion (lower layer) is 14 ug/L.**

The current year data for the epilimnion (the top inset graph) show that the phosphorus concentration ***decreased slightly*** from **June** to **July**, and then ***increased*** from **July** to **August**.

The historical data show that the 2005 mean epilimnetic phosphorus concentration is ***greater than*** the state median and similar lake median.

Overall, visual inspection of the historical data trend line for the epilimnion shows a ***stabilizing*** phosphorus trend which is ***greater than*** the state median and similar lake median.

The current year data for the hypolimnion (the bottom inset graph) show that the phosphorus concentration ***increased greatly*** from **June** to **July**, and then ***decreased slightly*** from **July** to **August**.

The turbidity of the hypolimnion (lower layer) sample was ***elevated*** on the **July** and **August** sampling events (**8.84 and 5.24 ug/L, respectively**). Historically, the turbidity and phosphorus levels have been ***elevated*** in the hypolimnion on most sampling events. This suggests that the lake bottom is composed of a thick layer of organic material that is easily disturbed. The presence of a thick organic layer on the lake bottom (which is likely comprised of decomposed plants and algae, and also sediment) would also explain the lower dissolved oxygen concentration near the lake bottom.

The historical data show that the 2005 mean hypolimnetic phosphorus concentration is ***much greater than*** the state median and similar lake median.

Overall, visual inspection of the historical data trend line for the hypolimnion shows a **variable** phosphorus trend since monitoring began. Specifically, the mean annual concentration has **fluctuated between approximately 15 and 39 ug/L** since monitoring began.

One of the most important approaches to reducing phosphorus loading to a waterbody is to continually educate watershed residents about its sources and how excessive amounts can adversely impact the ecology and value of lakes and ponds. Phosphorus sources within a lake or pond's watershed typically include septic systems, animal waste, lawn fertilizer, road and construction erosion, and natural wetlands.

#### **TABLE INTERPRETATION**

➤ **Table 2: Phytoplankton**

Table 2 (Appendix B) lists the current and historical phytoplankton species observed in the lake. Specifically, this table lists the three most dominant phytoplankton species observed in the sample and their relative abundance in the sample.

The dominant phytoplankton species observed in the **June** sample were ***Mallomonas* (golden-brown)**, ***Asterionella* (diatom)**, and ***Coelosphaerium* (cyanobacteria)**.

Phytoplankton populations undergo a natural succession during the growing season (Please refer to the "Biological Monitoring Parameters" section of this report for a more detailed explanation regarding seasonal plankton succession). Diatoms and golden-brown algae are typical in New Hampshire's less productive lakes and ponds.

➤ **Table 4: pH**

Table 4 (Appendix B) presents the in-lake and tributary current year and historical pH data.

pH is measured on a logarithmic scale of 0 (acidic) to 14 (basic). pH is important to the survival and reproduction of fish and other aquatic life. A pH below 6.0 limits the growth and reproduction of fish. A pH between 6.0 and 7.0 is ideal for fish. The median pH value for the epilimnion (upper layer) in New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is **6.6**, which indicates that the surface waters in the state are slightly acidic. For a more detailed explanation regarding pH, please refer to the "Chemical Monitoring Parameters" section of this report.

The mean pH at the deep spot this season ranged from **6.17** in the hypolimnion to **6.61** in the epilimnion, which means that the water is ***slightly acidic***.

It is important to point out that the pH in the hypolimnion (lower layer) was ***lower (more acidic)*** than in the epilimnion (upper layer). This increase in acidity near the lake bottom is likely due the decomposition of organic matter and the release of acidic by-products into the water column.

Due to the presence of granite bedrock in the state and acid deposition (from snowmelt, rainfall, and atmospheric particulates) in New Hampshire, there is not much that can be done to effectively increase lake pH.

➤ **Table 5: Acid Neutralizing Capacity**

Table 5 (Appendix B) presents the current year and historical epilimnetic ANC for each year the lake has been monitored through VLAP.

Buffering capacity (ANC) describes the ability of a solution to resist changes in pH by neutralizing the acidic input. The median ANC value for New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is **4.9 mg/L**, which indicates that many lakes and ponds in the state are at least "moderately vulnerable" to acidic inputs. For a more detailed explanation, please refer to the "Chemical Monitoring Parameters" section of this report.

The mean Acid Neutralizing Capacity (ANC) of the epilimnion (the upper layer) was **6.0 mg/L** this season, which is ***slightly greater than*** the state median. In addition, this indicates that the lake is ***moderately vulnerable*** to acidic inputs (such as acid precipitation).

➤ **Table 6: Conductivity**

Table 6 (Appendix B) presents the current and historical conductivity values for tributaries and in-lake data. Conductivity is the numerical expression of the ability of water to carry an electric current (which is determined by the number of negatively charged ions from metals, salts, and minerals in the water column). The median conductivity value for New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is **40.0 uMhos/cm**. For a more detailed explanation, please refer to the "Chemical Monitoring Parameters" section of this report.

The mean annual conductivity in the epilimnion at the deep spot this season was **90.28 uMhos/cm**, which is **greater than** the state median.

The conductivity has **fluctuated** in the lake and the inlet tributaries since monitoring began, but has generally been **much greater than** the state median. Typically, sources of increased conductivity are due to human activity. These activities include septic systems, agricultural runoff, and road runoff (which contains road salt during the spring snow melt). New development in the watershed can alter runoff patterns and expose new soil and bedrock areas, which could contribute to increasing conductivity. In addition, natural sources, such as iron and manganese deposits in bedrock, can influence conductivity.

We also recommend that your monitoring group conduct a shoreline conductivity survey of the lake and the tributaries with **elevated** conductivity to help pinpoint the sources of **elevated** conductivity.

*To learn how to conduct a shoreline or tributary conductivity survey, please refer to the 2004 “Special Topic Article” or contact the VLAP Coordinator.*

It is possible that de-icing materials applied to nearby roadways during the winter months may be influencing the conductivity in the pond. In New Hampshire, the most commonly used de-icing material is salt (sodium chloride).

Therefore, we recommend that the **epilimnion** (upper layer) and the inlets be sampled for chloride next season. This sampling may help us pinpoint what areas of the watershed which are contributing to the increasing in-lake conductivity.

*Please note that there will be an additional cost for each of the chloride samples. In addition, it is best to conduct chloride sampling in the spring as the snow is melting and during rain events.*

➤ **Table 8: Total Phosphorus**

Table 8 (Appendix B) presents the current year and historical total phosphorus data for in-lake and tributary stations. Phosphorus is the nutrient that limits the algae’s ability to grow and reproduce. Please refer to the “Chemical Monitoring Parameters” section of this report for a more detailed explanation.

The mean annual total phosphorus concentration continued to be **elevated** in **Inlet 1** this season (**34 ug/L**). The mean turbidity continued to be **slightly elevated** this season as well (**1.91 NTUs**).

This station has had a history of **elevated** and **fluctuating** total phosphorus and turbidity levels. We recommend that your monitoring group conduct a stream survey and storm event sampling along this inlet so that we can determine what may be causing the elevated levels.

➤ **Table 9 and Table 10: Dissolved Oxygen and Temperature Data**

Table 9 (Appendix B) shows the dissolved oxygen/temperature profile(s) for the 2005 sampling season. Table 10 (Appendix B) shows the historical and current year dissolved oxygen concentration in the hypolimnion (lower layer). The presence of dissolved oxygen is vital to fish and amphibians in the water column and also to bottom-dwelling organisms. Please refer to the “Chemical Monitoring Parameters” section of this report for a more detailed explanation.

The dissolved oxygen concentration was **lower in the hypolimnion (lower layer) than in the epilimnion (upper layer)** at the deep spot of the lake on the **June** sampling event. As stratified lakes age, and as the summer progresses, oxygen typically becomes **depleted** in the hypolimnion by the process of decomposition. Specifically, the loss of oxygen in the hypolimnion results primarily from the process of biological breakdown of organic matter (i.e.; biological organisms use oxygen to break down organic matter), both in the water column and particularly at the bottom of the lake where the water meets the sediment. When oxygen levels are depleted to less than 1 mg/L in the hypolimnion (**as it has been on many previous biologist visits**), the phosphorus that is normally bound up in the sediment may be re-released into the water column (a process referred to as **internal phosphorus loading**).

➤ **Table 11: Turbidity**

Table 11 (Appendix B) lists the current year and historical data for in-lake and tributary turbidity. Turbidity in the water is caused by suspended matter, such as clay, silt, and algae. Water clarity is strongly influenced by turbidity. Please refer to the “Other Monitoring Parameters” section of this report for a more detailed explanation.

As discussed previously, the turbidity of the hypolimnion (lower layer) sample was **elevated** on the **July** and **August** sampling events as it has been on many sampling events in the past. This suggests that the lake bottom is covered by a thick organic layer of sediment which is easily disturbed. When the lake bottom is disturbed, sediment, which typically contains attached phosphorus, is released into the water column.



In addition, the turbidity of the epilimnion (upper layer) sample was **elevated (3.15 NTUs)** on the **August** sampling event. It had rained approximately one inch in the 24 hours prior to sampling which suggests that sediment-laden stormwater runoff has entered the surface layers of the lake and/or an algal bloom had occurred in the lake.

➤ **Table 12: Bacteria (*E.coli*)**

Table 12 lists the current year and historical data for bacteria (*E.coli*) testing. (Please note that Table 12 now lists the maximum and minimum results for this season and for all past sampling seasons.) *E. coli* is a normal bacterium found in the large intestine of humans and other warm-blooded animals. *E.coli* is used as an indicator organism because it is easily cultured and its presence in the water, in defined amounts, indicates that sewage **MAY** be present. If sewage is present in the water, potentially harmful disease-causing organisms **MAY** also be present.

On the August sampling event, the *E. coli* concentration was elevated in the **Inlet I** and **Outlet** sample (**270** and **140** counts per 100mL of sample, respectively). However, these results **were not greater than** the state standard of 406 counts per 100 mL for recreational waters that are not designated public beaches.

If you are concerned about *E. coli* levels at these stations, your monitoring group should conduct rain event sampling and bracket sampling in these area. This additional sampling may help us determine the source of the bacteria.

*For a detailed explanation on how to conduct rain event and bracketing sampling, please refer to the 2002 VLAP Annual Report "Special Topic Article" or contact the VLAP Coordinator.*

➤ **Table 14: Current Year Biological and Chemical Raw Data**

This table lists the most current sampling season results. Since the maximum, minimum, and annual mean values for each parameter are not shown on this table, this table displays the current year "raw" (meaning unprocessed) data. The results are sorted by station, depth zone (epilimnion, metalimnion, and hypolimnion) and parameter.

➤ **Table 15: Station Table**

As of the Spring of 2004, all historical and current year VLAP data are included in the DES Environmental Monitoring Database (EMD). To facilitate the transfer of VLAP data into the EMD, a new station identification system had to be developed. While volunteer

monitoring groups can still use the sampling station names that they have used in the past (and are most familiar with), an EMD station name also exists for each VLAP sampling location. For each station sampled at your lake or pond, Table 15 identifies what EMD station name corresponds to the station names you have used in the past and will continue to use in the future.

### **DATA QUALITY ASSURANCE AND CONTROL**

#### **Annual Assessment Audit:**

During the annual visit to your lake/pond, the biologist conducted a “Sampling Procedures Assessment Audit” for your monitoring group. Specifically, the biologist observed the performance of your monitoring group while sampling and filled out an assessment audit sheet to document the ability of the volunteer monitors to follow the proper field sampling procedures (as outlined in the VLAP Monitor’s Field Manual). This assessment is used to identify any aspects of sample collection in which volunteer monitors fail to follow proper procedures, and also provides an opportunity for the biologist to retrain the volunteer monitors as necessary. This will ultimately ensure that the samples that the volunteer monitors collect are truly representative of actual lake and tributary conditions.

Overall, your monitoring group did an **excellent** job collecting samples on the annual biologist visit this season! Specifically, the members of your monitoring group followed the proper field sampling procedures and there was no need for the biologist to provide additional training. Keep up the good work!

#### **Sample Receipt Checklist:**

Each time your monitoring group dropped off samples at the laboratory this summer, the laboratory staff completed a sample receipt checklist to assess and document if the volunteer monitors followed proper sampling techniques when collecting the samples. The purpose of the sample receipt checklist is to minimize, and hopefully eliminate, future re-occurrences of improper sampling techniques.

Overall, the sample receipt checklist showed that your monitoring group did an **excellent** job when collecting samples and submitting them to the laboratory this season! Specifically, the members of your monitoring group followed the proper field sampling procedures and there was no need for the laboratory staff to contact your group with questions, and no samples were rejected for analysis.

**USEFUL RESOURCES**

*Acid Deposition Impacting New Hampshire's Ecosystems*, NHDES Fact Sheet ARD-32, (603) 271-2975 or [www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/ard/ard-32.htm](http://www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/ard/ard-32.htm).

*Best Management Practices to Control Nonpoint Source Pollution: A Guide for Citizens and Town Officials*, NHDES Booklet WD-03-42, (603) 271-2975.

*Best Management Practices for Well Drilling Operations*, NHDES Fact Sheet WD-WSEB-21-4, (603) 271-2975 or [www.des.nh.gov/factsheets/ws/ws-21-4.htm](http://www.des.nh.gov/factsheets/ws/ws-21-4.htm).

*Biodegradable Soaps and Water Quality*, NHDES Fact Sheet BB-54, (603) 271-2975 or [www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/bb/bb-54.htm](http://www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/bb/bb-54.htm).

*Canada Geese Facts and Management Options*, NHDES Fact Sheet BB-53, (603) 271-2975 or [www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/bb/bb-53.htm](http://www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/bb/bb-53.htm).

*Cyanobacteria in New Hampshire Waters Potential Dangers of Blue-Green Algae Blooms*, NHDES Fact Sheet WMB-10, (603) 271-2975 or [www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/wmb/wmb-10.htm](http://www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/wmb/wmb-10.htm).

*Erosion Control for Construction in the Protected Shoreland Buffer Zone*, NHDES Fact Sheet WD-SP-1, (603) 271-2975 or [www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/sp/sp-1.htm](http://www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/sp/sp-1.htm).

*Freshwater Jellyfish In New Hampshire*, NHDES Fact Sheet WD-BB-5, (603) 271-2975 or [www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/bb/bb-51/htm](http://www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/bb/bb-51/htm).

*Impacts of Development Upon Stormwater Runoff*, NHDES Fact Sheet WD-WQE-7, (603) 271-2975 or [www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/wqe/wqe-7.htm](http://www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/wqe/wqe-7.htm).

*IPM: An Alternative to Pesticides*, NHDES Fact Sheet WD-SP-3, (603) 271-2975 or [www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/sp/sp-3.htm](http://www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/sp/sp-3.htm).

*Iron Bacteria in Surface Water*, NHDES Fact Sheet WD-BB-18, (603) 271-2975 or [www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/bb/bb-18.htm](http://www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/bb/bb-18.htm).

*Lake Foam*, NHDES Fact Sheet WD-BB-4, (603) 271-2975 or [www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/bb/bb-5.htm](http://www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/bb/bb-5.htm).

*Lake Protection Tips: Some Do's and Don'ts for Maintaining Healthy Lakes*, NHDES Fact Sheet WD-BB-9, (603) 271-2975 or [www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/bb/bb-9.htm](http://www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/bb/bb-9.htm).

*Low Impact Development Hydrologic Analysis.* Manual prepared by Prince George's County, Maryland, Department of Environmental Resources. July 1999. To access this document, visit [www.epa.gov/owow/nps/lid\\_hydr.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/lid_hydr.pdf) or call the EPA Water Resource Center at (202) 566-1736.

*Low Impact Development: Taking Steps to Protect New Hampshire's Surface Waters* NHDES Fact Sheet WD-WMB-16, (603) 271-2975 or [www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/wmb/wmb-17.htm](http://www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/wmb/wmb-17.htm).

*Proper Lawn Care In the Protected Shoreland, The Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act*, NHDES Fact Sheet WD-SP-2, (603) 271-2975 or [www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/sp/sp-2.htm](http://www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/sp/sp-2.htm).

*Road Salt and Water Quality*, NHDES Fact Sheet WD-WMB-4, (603) 271-2975 or [www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/wmb/wmb-4.htm](http://www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/wmb/wmb-4.htm).

*Sand Dumping - Beach Construction*, NHDES Fact Sheet WD-BB-15, (603) 271-2975 or [www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/bb/bb-15.htm](http://www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/bb/bb-15.htm).

*Shorelands Under the Jurisdiction of the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act*, NHDES Fact Sheet SP-4, (603) 271-2975 or [www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/sp/sp-4.htm](http://www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/sp/sp-4.htm).

*Soil Erosion and Sediment Control on Construction Sites*, NHDES Fact Sheet WQE-6, (603) 271-2975 or [www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/wqe/wqe-6.htm](http://www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/wqe/wqe-6.htm).

*Swimmers Itch*, NHDES Fact Sheet WD-BB-2, (603) 271-2975 or [www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/bb/bb-2.htm](http://www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/bb/bb-2.htm).

*Through the Looking Glass: A Field Guide to Aquatic Plants*, North American Lake Management Society, 1988, (608) 233-2836 or [www.nalms.org](http://www.nalms.org).

*Weed Watchers: An Association to Halt the Spread of Exotic Aquatic Plants*, NHDES Fact Sheet WD-BB-4, (603) 271-2975 or [www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/bb/bb-4.htm](http://www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/bb/bb-4.htm).

*Watershed Districts and Ordinances*, NHDES Fact Sheet WD-WMB-16, (603) 271-2975 or [www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/wmb/wmb-16.htm](http://www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/wmb/wmb-16.htm).